

WE CLAIM:

1. A client terminal connectable to a video distribution system and a display device, the video distribution system provides program guide information to create a program guide that includes program guide entries for subscribed channels and non-subscribed channels, the client terminal comprising:

- a video distribution system interface to receive the program guide information;
- a display interface to display the program guide on the display device;
- a user interface to receive user input; and
- a terminal controller responsive to a subscription control program for:
 - a. in response to user input, selecting a program guide entry from the program guide; and
 - b. if the selected program guide entry is for a non-subscribed channel,
 - i. selecting a bundle of channels based upon a subscription matrix for the user, the selected program guide entry, and available bundles of channels for subscription; and
 - ii. transmitting a subscription request for the selected bundle of channels to the video distribution system.

2. The client terminal of claim 1, wherein selecting a bundle of channels further comprises:

- a. recommending at least one bundle of channels for subscription by the user;
- b. accepting user input to select a bundle of channels for subscription by the user; and
- c. transmitting a subscription request for the selected bundle of channels to the video distribution system.

3. The client terminal of claim 1, wherein, the video distribution system after receipt of the subscription request for the selected bundle of channels verifies a user's credit with a billing system to determine whether the user's credit is approved or disapproved for the selected bundle of channels, the terminal controller responsive to the subscription control program for:

- a. receiving the approval or disapproval from the video distribution system; and
- b. if the user's credit is approved,
 - i. updating the subscription matrix to reflect that the client terminal is now subscribed to the selected bundle of channels; and

9 ii. authorizing access to the selected bundle of channels.

1 4. The client terminal of claim 3, wherein the subscription matrix is stored both locally at
2 the client terminal and remotely at the video distribution system.

1 5. The client terminal of claim 3, wherein, the subscription matrix includes a client terminal
2 I.D. designating the associated client terminal, channels subscribed to by the client terminal, and
3 available channels not subscribed to by the client terminal.

1 6. The client terminal of claim 1, wherein, the selected bundle of channels is the most cost
2 effective bundle of channels having a subscription cost that is less than the subscription cost of
3 individually subscribing to the non-subscribed channel.

1 7. The client terminal of claim 1, further comprising a preference engine, wherein the
2 preference engine selects program guide entries for non-subscribed channels for display in the
3 program guide based upon a user's viewing patterns.

1 8. The client terminal of claim 1, wherein, the client terminal is coupled to the video
2 distribution system by a link that provides a persistent connection.

1 9. The client terminal of claim 1, wherein, a channel includes a tier of channels.

1 10. The client terminal of claim 1, wherein, a channel includes a computer network channel.

1 11. The client terminal of claim 1, further comprising, selecting only a program of the
2 program guide entry on a non-subscribed channel for subscription in selecting the bundle of
3 channels.

1 12. The client terminal of claim 1, wherein, the video distribution system is a cable head end.

1 13. A computer program embodied in a computer readable storage medium for use in a client
2 terminal connectable to a video distribution system and a display device, the video distribution
3 system provides program guide information to create a program guide that includes program
4 guide entries for subscribed channels and non-subscribed channels, the computer program
5 comprising code segments for:

- 6 a. in response to user input, selecting a program guide entry from the program guide;
7 and
8 b. if the selected program guide entry is for a non-subscribed channel,
9 i. selecting a bundle of channels based upon a subscription matrix for the user,
10 the selected program guide entry, and available bundles of channels for
11 subscription; and
12 ii. transmitting a subscription request for the selected bundle of channels to the
13 video distribution system.

1 14. The computer program of claim 13, wherein selecting a bundle of channels further
2 comprises code segments for:

- 3 a. recommending at least one bundle of channels for subscription by the user;
4 b. accepting user input to select a bundle of channels for subscription by the user; and
5 c. transmitting a subscription request for the selected bundle of channels to the video
6 distribution system.

1 15. The computer program of claim 13, wherein, the video distribution system after receipt of
2 the subscription request for the selected bundle of channels verifies a user's credit with a billing
3 system to determine whether the user's credit is approved or disapproved for the selected bundle
4 of channels, further comprising code segments for:

- 5 a. receiving the approval or disapproval from the video distribution system; and
6 b. if the user's credit is approved,
7 i. updating the subscription matrix to reflect that the client terminal is now
8 subscribed to the selected bundle of channels; and
9 ii. authorizing access to the selected bundle of channels.

1 16. The computer program of claim 15, wherein the subscription matrix is stored both locally
2 at the client terminal and remotely at the video distribution system.

1 17. The computer program of claim 15, wherein, the subscription matrix includes a client
2 terminal I.D. designating the associated client terminal, channels subscribed to by the client
3 terminal, and available channels not subscribed to by the client terminal.

1 18. The computer program of claim 13, wherein, the selected bundle of channels is the most
2 cost effective bundle of channels having a subscription cost that is less than the subscription cost
3 of individually subscribing to the non-subscribed channel.

1 19. The computer program of claim 13, further comprising code segments for:
2 a. displaying a promotion display for a bundle of channels
3 b. in response to user input, selecting the promotion display; and
4 c. transmitting a subscription request for the bundle of channels to the video distribution
5 system.

1 20. The computer program of claim 13, further comprising code segments for selecting
2 program guide entries for non-subscribed channels for display in the program guide based upon a
3 user's viewing patterns.

1 21. The computer program of claim 13, wherein, the client terminal is coupled to the video
2 distribution system by a link that provides a persistent connection.

1 22. The computer program of claim 13, wherein, a channel includes a tier of channels.

1 23. The computer program of claim 13, wherein, a channel includes a computer network
2 channel.

1 24. The computer program of claim 13, further comprising code segments for selecting only
2 a program of the program guide entry on a non-subscribed channel for subscription in selecting
3 the bundle of channels.

- 1 25. The computer program of claim 13, wherein, the video distribution system is a cable head
2 end.

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1 26. A method for selecting a bundle of channels utilizing a program guide, the program guide
2 including program guide entries for subscribed channels and non-subscribed channels, the
3 method comprising the steps of:

- 4 a. in response to user input, selecting a program guide entry from the program guide;
5 and
6 b. if the selected program guide entry is for a non-subscribed channel,
7 1. selecting a bundle of channels based upon a subscription matrix for the user,
8 the selected program guide entry, and available bundles of channels for
9 subscription; and
10 2. transmitting a subscription request for the selected bundle of channels to a
11 video distribution system.

1 27. The method of claim 26, wherein selecting a bundle of channels further comprises steps
2 for:

- 3 a. recommending at least one bundle of channels for subscription by the user;
4 b. accepting user input to select a bundle of channels for subscription by the user; and
5 c. transmitting a subscription request for the selected bundle of channels to the video
6 distribution system.

1 28. The method of claim 26, wherein, the video distribution system after receipt of the
2 subscription request for the selected bundle of channels verifies a user's credit with a billing
3 system to determine whether the user's credit is approved or disapproved for the selected bundle
4 of channels, further comprising steps for:

- 5 a. receiving the approval or disapproval from the video distribution system; and
6 b. if the user's credit is approved,
7 i. updating the subscription matrix to reflect that the client terminal is now
8 subscribed to the selected bundle of channels; and
9 ii. authorizing access to the selected bundle of channels.

1 29. The method of claim 28, wherein the subscription matrix is stored both locally at the
2 client terminal and remotely at the video distribution system.

1 30. The method of claim 28, wherein, the subscription matrix includes a client terminal I.D.
2 designating the associated client terminal, channels subscribed to by the client terminal, and
3 available channels not subscribed to by the client terminal.

1 31. The method of claim 26, wherein, the selected bundle of channels is the most cost
2 effective bundle of channels having a subscription cost that is less than the subscription cost of
3 individually subscribing to the non-subscribed channel.

1 32. The method of claim 26, further comprising steps for:
2 a. displaying a promotion for a bundle of channels
3 b. in response to user input, selecting the promotion display; and
4 c. transmitting a subscription request for the bundle of channels to the video distribution
5 system.

1 33. The method of claim 26, further comprising the step of selecting program guide entries
2 for non-subscribed channels for display in the program guide based upon a user's viewing
3 patterns.

1 34. The method of claim 26, wherein, the client terminal is coupled to the video distribution
2 system by a link that provides a persistent connection.

1 35. The method of claim 26, wherein, a channel includes a tier of channels.

1 36. The method of claim 26, wherein, a channel includes a computer network channel.

1 37. The method of claim 26, further comprising the step of selecting only a program of the
2 program guide entry on a non-subscribed channel for subscription in selecting the bundle of
3 channels.

1 38. The method of claim 26, wherein, the video distribution system is a cable head end.

1 39. A video distribution system connectable to a client terminal that is in turn connected to a
2 display device, the video distribution system provides program guide information to the client
3 terminal to create a program guide that includes program guide entries for subscribed channels
4 and non-subscribed channels displayable on the display device, the video distribution system
5 comprising:

- 6 a video distribution system controller; and
7 a subscription matrix storage to store a subscription matrix for the client terminal;
8 wherein, in response to user input selecting a program guide entry from the program
9 guide for a non-subscribed channel received from the client terminal, the video
10 distribution system controller:
11 selects a bundle of channels for the client terminal based upon the subscription
12 matrix for the client terminal, the selected program guide entry, and available
13 bundles of channels for subscription.

1 40. The video distribution system of claim 39, wherein selecting a bundle of channels further
2 comprises:

- 3 a. transmitting recommended bundles of channels for the user to the client terminal; and
4 b. accepting user input from the client terminal to select a bundle of channels for
5 subscription by the user.

1 41. The video distribution system of claim 40, wherein, after receipt of the user input from
2 the client terminal to select a bundle of channels, the video distribution system controller:

- 3 a. verifies a user's credit with a billing system to determine whether the user's credit is
4 approved or disapproved for the selected bundle of channels; and
5 b. if the user's credit is approved,
6 i. updates the subscription matrix to reflect that the client terminal is now
7 subscribed to the selected bundle of channels.

1 42. The video distribution system of claim 41, wherein the video distribution system
2 controller updates a subscription matrix located at the client terminal such that the client terminal
3 authorizes access to the selected bundle of channels.

1 43. The video distribution system of claim 41, wherein, the subscription matrix includes a
2 client terminal I.D. designating the associated client terminal, channels subscribed to by the
3 client terminal, and available channels not subscribed to by the client terminal.

1 44. The video distribution system of claim 39, wherein, the selected bundle of channels is the
2 most cost effective bundle of channels having a subscription cost that is less than the
3 subscription cost of individually subscribing to the non-subscribed channel.

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1 45. A client terminal connectable to a video distribution system and a display device, the
2 video distribution system provides promotion information to create a promotion display that
3 advertises a bundle of channels, the client terminal comprising:
4 a video distribution system interface to receive the promotion information;
5 a display interface to display a promotion display for a bundle of channels on the display
6 device;
7 a user interface to receive user input; and
8 a terminal controller responsive to a subscription control program for:
9 a. in response to user input, selecting a promotion display for a bundle of
10 channels; and
11 b. transmitting a subscription request for the selected bundle of channels to the
12 video distribution system.

1 46. The client terminal of claim 45, further comprising a preference engine, wherein the
2 preference engine selects a promotion display for a bundle of channels for display on the display
3 device based upon a user's viewing patterns.

1 47. The client terminal of claim 45, wherein, the video distribution system after receipt of the
2 subscription request for the selected bundle of channels verifies a user's credit with a billing
3 system to determine whether the user's credit is approved or disapproved for the selected bundle
4 of channels, the terminal controller responsive to the subscription control program for:
5 a. receiving the approval or disapproval from the video distribution system; and
6 b. if the user's credit is approved,
7 i. updating a subscription matrix to reflect that the client terminal is now
8 subscribed to the selected bundle of channels; and
9 ii. authorizing access to the selected bundle of channels.

1 48. The client terminal of claim 47, wherein the subscription matrix is stored both locally at
2 the client terminal and remotely at the video distribution system.

1 49. The client terminal of claim 48, wherein, the subscription matrix includes a client
2 terminal I.D. designating the associated client terminal, channels subscribed to by the client
3 terminal, and available channels not subscribed to by the client terminal.

- 1 50. The client terminal of claim 45, wherein, the client terminal is coupled to the video
2 distribution system by a link that provides a persistent connection.
- 1 51. The client terminal of claim 45, wherein, a channel includes a tier of channels.
- 1 52. The client terminal of claim 45, wherein, a channel includes a computer network channel.

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